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Good Good A Every one should

Read this
SERMON,

PREACHED AT

TRINITY CHURCH,

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK,

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 22, 1837.

BY

THE REV. I. W. D. GRAY,

ASSISTANT MINISTER.

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"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking
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Psalm 119, v.

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SAINT JOHN:

PRINTED BY HENRY CHUBB, MARKET-SQUARE.

1837.

THE Individual to whom the following Sermon refers, was
Mr. ROBERT PARKER DUVERNET, whose pious life and
peaceful death, have rendered his memory peculiarly dear,
not only to his immediate relatives, but to others who feel
an interest in the progress of vital religion. It is published,
at the particular request of his friends, and under the hope
that God may be pleased to render it useful to some of those
young persons, who were his intimate companions, and who,
from their own observation, can testify to the steadfastness
and consistency of his religious principles.

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SERMON.

HEBREWS VI.—12.

"Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

EVER since the fall of man, Divine Mercy has held forth to his view a train of blessed promises, as the high encouragement to obedience; and in every age, and under every successive dispensation, there have been some, who have steadfastly believed these promises, and "walked with God," in the full expectation of realizing their fulfilment. These persons indeed have generally been few in number. Even under the glorious light of the Christian economy, they have hitherto borne but a small proportion to those who have preferred the pleasures and profits of the world to the favour of an invisible God; but whether few or many, wealthy or poor, learned or ignorant, honoured or despised, they have chosen the path of wisdom, done good in their generation, honoured God in the world, possessed a happiness which other men have never tasted, and have gone, at the termination of their earthly career, to share in heaven's transcendent and interminable joys. Such examples are of great value to those who are desirous to pursue the path which they have travelled, and to aim at the possession of

that eternal rest which they have gained ; for they are witnesses to us, unimpeachable witnesses, of the truth of the Bible, of the power of divine grace, of the practicability of a truly religious life, and of the blessedness of *their* end, who select the service of God and the yoke of Christ, in preference to the pleasures of the world and the bondage of sin. The voice of God speaks to us through their instrumentality. Through *them* He calls upon us, "to lay aside every weight and the sin which most easily besets us, and to run with patience the race which is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith."* Through *them* He addresses us, now, as candidates for the heavenly prize, and says—"Be not slothful but followers of *them*, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Let us then with the permission and blessing of God, contemplate for a few moments, the *examples* which are held up to our view, and the *exhortation* which is given in regard to them.

I. In the description which the text presents of these persons, two points especially demand attention ; their *privilege* and their *character*. Their *privilege* is briefly summed up, in that part of the text which describes them as "inheriting the promises." The promises of God, present to the mind a wide field of contemplation. In that precious deposit of truth, the word of God, we have promises that relate to time, promises that relate to eternity ; promises of spiritual and promises of temporal blessings ; promises that refer to the Church of God collectively, and promises that refer to its individual members—to their peculiar trials—their appropriate duties—their exalted hopes and expectations.

There is, first, that great promise of the Gospel, which is in fact, the foundation of every other pro-

* Heb. 12. 1-2.

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tual blessing is conferred ; viz—the *promise of the*
free, full, and everlasting pardon of sin to every true
believer. It is now our happiness to know, that
" there is no condemnation to them that are in
Christ Jesus ; " * that " being justified by faith we
have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus
Christ ; " † to hear the voice of a gracious God de-
claring to every believing soul, " your sins and your
iniquities will I remember no more. " ‡ " I, even I,
am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine
own sake, and will not remember thy sins. " §

There is the *promise of converting grace*. To
the pardoned soul, God pledges himself to give
more. " A new heart will I give you, and a new
spirit will I put within you : and I will take away
the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you
an heart of flesh. " ||

There is the *promise of strengthening grace*. Hear
the voice of Jesus declaring " my grace is suffici-
ent for thee. " ¶ Hear the voice of his inspired ser-
vant, assuring you, that " God is faithful, who will
not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ;
but will with the temptation also make a way to
escape, that ye may be able to bear it. " **

There is the *promise of divine teaching and gui-
dance*. Mark the *source* of it. " Good and up-
right is the Lord : therefore shall he teach sinners
in the way. " †† Mark the *extent* of it. " If any of
you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to
all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be
given him. " ‡‡ Mark the *terms* of it. " If any man
will do his will he shall know of the doctrine, whe-
ther it be of God. " §§ Mark the *Agent* in accom-
plishing it. " When He the spirit of truth is come,
He will guide you into all truth. " ||||

* Rom. 8. 1.
|| Ezek. 36. 26.
‡‡ James 1. 5.

† Rom. 8. 1.
¶ 2 Cor. 12. 9.
§§ John 7. 17.

‡ Heb. 8. 12.
** 1 Cor. 10. 13.
||| John 16. 13.

§ Isai. 43. 25.
†† Psal. 25. 8.

There is the *promise of answers to believing prayer*. Thus it was given to Israel of old. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* Thus it is given to the followers of Jesus. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."† Hence it is the privilege of these to say, "This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to his will he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask we know that we have the petitions, that we desire of Him."‡

There is the *promise of inward peace and joy*. "The Lord will speak peace to his people and to his saints."§ The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."|| "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you."¶

There is the *promise of support in trouble*. Thus it is said, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble,"** and again, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble and he knoweth them that trust in Him."†† Hence the encouraging exhortation, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee,"‡‡ and hence the cheering invitation of the Son of God, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."§§

There is the *promise of special support in a dying hour*. As in general it is promised to the suffering believer that "the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing," that "he will make all his bed in his sickness,"|||| so more particularly is it pledged to him, that "the rod and staff of his God shall sustain him, when passing through the valley

* Isai. 40. 31.

† Isai. 32. 17.

‡‡ Psal. 55. 22.

† Mat. 21. 22.

¶ John 14. 27.

§§ Mat. 11. 28.

‡‡ John 5. 14, 15.

** Psal. 46. 1.

|||| Psal. 41. 3.

§ Psal. 85. 8.

†† Nahum 1. 7.

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of the shadow of death ;"* "that when flesh and heart are failing, then God shall be the strength of his heart and his portion forever."† We are accordingly told that "the righteous hath hope in his death,"‡ and are invited to "mark the perfect man and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace."§

There is the *promise of immediate happiness after death*. Thus Jesus assured the dying malefactor, "Verily I say unto you, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."|| Cheered by this delightful prospect, Paul had "a desire to depart and be with Christ ;"¶ and upon this ground declared it, as the experience of himself and his fellow christians—"we are confident I say and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."***

There is the *promise of a glorious resurrection*. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live,"†† and again—"this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day."‡‡

There is, finally, the *promise of everlasting rest and glory in the immediate presence of God*. Thus our gracious Redeemer tells his sorrowing disciples ; "In my father's house are many mansions : if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also ;"§§ and thus "we according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness ;"||| knowing assuredly that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God."¶¶ And what a

* Psal. 23. 4.

† Luke 23. 43.

‡† John 6. 40.

† Psal. 73. 26.

¶ Phil. 1. 23.

§§ John 14. 2, 3.

‡ Prov. 14. 32.

** 2 Cor. 5. 8.

||| 2 Pet. 3. 13.

§ Psal. 37. 37.

†† John 11. 25.

¶¶ Heb. 4. 9.

rest, my Brethren! what mansions! what glorious Heavens are these! There the servants of the Lamb "shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads; and there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the Sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever."*

Such is a brief outline of those exceeding great and precious promises to which the children of God are heirs, they are promises as you perceive, adapted to their state and wants in every possible situation in which they can be placed; exerting their benign influence upon them from the first moment of their acquaintance with God; sustaining them through every trial of their earthly pilgrimage; cheering them in the valley of death, and accompanying them beyond the confines of the tomb, to that scene of ineffable blessedness, where "in the presence of God, there is fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore."†

Now it is the privilege of God's children to be *inheritors of these promises*; inheritors because they are children. They who through the free grace of God have been born again from above, and have received in their hearts the spirit of adoption; are thereby constituted the children of God, and "if children then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."‡ From that moment these animating promises, nay "all things are their's, whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are their's; and they are Christ's; and Christ is God's."§

In the *character* of such persons we shall find, upon examination, that we can trace in a higher or lower degree all the transforming effects of God's blessed spirit, "love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,"||

* Rev. 22. 4, 5. † Psal. 16. 11. ‡ Rom. 8. 17. § 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. || Gal. 5. 22, 23.

but, when viewed in immediate connexion with their attainment of the promises, two graces are peculiarly prominent, their *faith* and their *patience*.

The *faith* which animates the hearts of God's children, is a Divine principle, implanted and cherished there by the hand and power of God; and its immediate office is to receive as true, to confide in as certain, to credit with full reliance, whatever the Divine Being has revealed through the medium of his word and spirit. "Faith is the medium between the invisible truths which the Bible reveals, and the human soul the link between the testimony of God without us, and the mind of man to whom it is made. It is like the telescope to the natural eye, it brings near in their real magnitude and proportion, those objects of an invisible world, which reason could only dimly discern by its innate powers and the aid of tradition, or not discern at all."

This powerful and heaven-born principle is closely connected with our attainment of spiritual and eternal blessings.

It is so by *Divine appointment*, for God has been pleased by the terms of his Gospel, to tender these blessings to believers, and believers only, in all those cases where belief is possible. Thus to faith, we find is annexed the *remission of sin*. "To Him give all the Prophets witness that, through his name, whosoever *believeth* on him shall receive remission of sins."* To faith is annexed the privilege of *adoption*. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."† To faith is annexed our *spiritual illumination*. "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."‡ To faith is annexed the commencement and progress of our *sanctification*.

* Acts 10. 43.

† John 1. 12.

‡ John 12. 46.

Thus God is said to have put no difference between the Gentiles and the Jews, in the former instance as well as the latter, "purifying their hearts by Faith,"* and Jesus commanded Paul, to preach to the Gentiles, "that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in him."† To faith is annexed the privilege of *peace*. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God;‡ and again, our Lord says to the penitent, "Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace."§ Finally, to faith is annexed the *salvation of the soul*. Thus the message of the Gospel is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;"|| "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."¶ And the connexion is so close, so intimate, so important, in all these cases, that, to expect the blessing without believing, is to expect what never can be realized; for, as "He that hath the Son hath life, so he that hath not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."***

Here then is one sufficient reason why it must be "through faith" we inherit the promises. God has annexed together, in all these cases, the principle and the blessing, and no man can sever what he has joined. That some will dispute this point, may easily be credited. There are those now, as there always have been, who think it of little moment what a man believes, if his morals are correct and his general conduct consistent with the rules of civilized society; but as our unbelief cannot render the word of God of none effect; as our persuasions or opinions cannot alter the decisions of heaven, so it must remain an eternal and immutable truth, to be proved by experience and confessed by assembled milli-

* Acts 15. 9.

|| Acts 16. 31.

† Acts 26. 18.

‡ John 3. 16.

§ Rom. 5. 1.

** 1 John 5. 12.

§ Luke 7. 50.

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ons on the day of final account, that "he that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall perish everlastingly in his sins."*

Does this decision of heaven, wear, to any of our minds, the aspect of a mere arbitrary appointment? If it does so, my Brethren! it cannot lessen in the slightest degree, our obligations to submission, for what are we that we should undertake to regulate the counsels and decrees of Heaven; that we should rear our foolish imaginations in opposition to the wisdom of that omniscient Sovereign to whom nothing is past, or future, or distant, or obscure, to whom time and eternity—Heaven—Earth and Hell, all lie expanded, in their genuine colours and their utmost limits? But, a moment's reflection shows the wisdom of this arrangement, and discloses to us the fact, that the principle of faith in the believer's heart, is connected *by a natural process*, as well as by a supernatural appointment with the realization and enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

In order to perceive the truth of this remark, it is only necessary to reflect, that by the very act of believing we gain the *immediate possession* of some of the promises, and, at the same time, obtain the *only adequate motive* that can lead us to contend successfully for the rest. Are peace, and joy, and hope, and confidence, the subjects of promise? By believing we take them into possession. By believing, for example, we apprehend the power and willingness of Christ to save. That true and faithful saying, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,"† is taken home to the heart, with its consoling influence. This imparts peace to the soul. Even the glimmering hope or distant possibility of pardon, must exercise, to a certain extent, a tranquilizing effect upon the mind. Again, by believing, we take hold of the gracious promise of the

* Mark 16. 16.

† 1 Tim. 1. 15.

Spirit's presence and agency ; we realize the truth of the assurance that "the grace of Christ shall be sufficient for us, that his strength shall be made perfect in our weakness."* What must be the result of this, but the introduction into the heart, of joy and confidence and hope ?

But it seems more important to remark, that by the act of believing, we become possessed of the *only adequate motive* that can lead us to contend for those promises which are to be realized in a future world. For every undertaking which demands the sacrifice of present ease or gratification, some adequate motive must present itself to the mind of a rational being. It cannot, on the one hand, be reasonably expected, that inconvenience, pain or trouble, should be voluntarily encountered without some special end or design ; and, on the other hand, it is plainly shewn, by every day's experience, that dangers and hardships of every description will be cheerfully surmounted where such an object is in view. The soldier wades through seas of blood, to defend his country and gain the patriot's reward. The sailor, for a similar end, consents to live upon the element of storms. The man of science will sacrifice health, or life itself, for the acquirement of knowledge, for the attainment of literary fame. The young man, just rising in his professional pursuits, will devote time and labour to uninteresting studies, cheered by the hope of future eminence. The man of business, will give up the light of his days and the rest of his nights, for the possession of this world's riches. And why these painful sacrifices ? Why, in all these cases, this surrender of present ease and comfort ? Because each of the characters referred to, has what he conceives to be *an adequate end in view* : he surrenders present ease for the prospect of future acquisitions which he holds in higher esteem.

* 2 Cor. 12. 9.

Such, precisely, is the operation of *faith* upon the mind and heart of the Christian; it furnishes him with *an adequate motive* for sacrificing every thing beneath the Sun, that stands in competition with his prospects of future blessedness. It offers him what he feels to be a profitable exchange, eternity for time, heavenly glories for earthly vanities, the pleasures at God's right hand, for the joys of time and sense, which can only, at best, endure for a little season. See the operation of this principle on the mind of Abraham. His home and country were forsaken, for a better home, an heavenly country;* the very child of his affections was laid upon the altar of sacrifice,† that the favour and approbation of God might be retained. See its operation upon Moses. Neither Egypt's monarch, nor Egypt's riches, nor Egypt's luxuries and honours, could for a moment detain him, because these things, which to the worldly-minded are the common motives of action, were far less, in his estimation, than the higher recompense which the God of his Fathers had proposed to him in a better world.‡ So it was with the first Christians: they "walked by faith."§ Faith was their moving principle; it was, to their minds, "the substance of things hoped for—the evidence of things not seen;"|| it gave them such a realizing view, such a firm assurance of these invisible glories, that a paramount influence was thereby exerted upon their minds. By a similar, though generally less powerful influence, all true believers, at this hour, are swayed to renounce the gratifications of time and sense, and live for the future inheritance of the saints. Thus "through faith," through faith as *a divinely appointed means*, and through faith, as *an operative and powerful principle of action*, God's children inherit the promises.

* Gen. 12. 4, 5.
 ‡ 2 Cor. 5. 7.

† Gen. 22. 9, 10.
 || Heb. 11. 1.

‡ Heb. 11. 26.

In connexion with this high attainment, the grace of *patience* also, is peculiarly displayed. It is not through the influence of a transient impression upon the heart, but through an abiding faith, a faith accompanied by patient and persevering expectation, or, as the Apostle expresses it in the text, "through faith and patience," that the children of God inherit the promises. There is a kind of faith which many have, that leads them to begin, with apparent zeal, the Christian life, but which soon fails under the approach of trial or difficulty. Hence we read "the Just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."* And again, our Lord tells us there are those, who "for a while believe, but in time of temptation fall away."† On this account the Scripture lays peculiar stress upon the exercise of patience, in combination with our faith. Hence the precept, "let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."‡ Hence the promise, that God "will render to those who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour and immortality; eternal life."§ Hence the beautiful illustration of this grace, by St. James, "Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain; be ye also patient, establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."||

There are often peculiar circumstances which call more especially for the exercise of this grace, and where the exhibition of it, shews, in a remarkably strong and convincing light, the transcendent excellence of the Christian's principles. One situation where it is called for in a more than ordinary degree, is *under worldly opposition*. This trial is often hard to endure, especially to the young and inexpe-

* Heb. 10. 38. † Luke 8. 13. ‡ James 1. 4. § Rom. 2. 7. || James 5. 7, 8.

rienced Christian. A hasty spirit under these circumstances, is seriously to be deprecated ; it will probably lead to great indiscretions, perhaps to the renunciation of our principles ; whereas patience will open the ear to the important counsel which says, "Cast not away your confidence which hath great recompense of reward, for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise."* Another case, is where the Christian is subjected to *protracted bodily sufferings*. Here natural fortitude may do something for the sufferer, but not enough. It may silence the language of repining, but it cannot teach the heart, meekly and cheerfully to acquiesce in the will of heaven ; to lie passive in the hands of God, saying as pangs succeed to pangs, "Father not my will, but thine be done."† There must be divine teaching to produce this. The heart must be endued with patience from above. *Heavy and overwhelming calamities*, present also an especial occasion for the exercise of this grace. Even the true Christian is sometimes astounded by these. They come so unexpectedly, or they go to such an extent, or they seem connected with such a gloomy train of consequences, that his mind for a season, is appalled and sinks under the burden. But here again the voice of wisdom meets him with the friendly admonition, — "Take my Brethren, the Prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord ; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy."‡ If this counsel be only listened to in simplicity, it is soon found by happy experience, that "unto the godly there ariseth up light in the darkness ;"§ that visitations however trying or painful, are all accom-

* Heb. 10. 35, 36.

† Luke 22. 42.

‡ James 5. 10, 11.

§ Psal. 112. 4.

panied with blessings to the christian, are all intended "to work together for good to them that love God."* Lastly, we may name, *spiritual depression* as another state where this grace is peculiarly needed. Every true believer has a title to peace of soul, but every true believer does not possess it in an equal degree; nor does every true believer possess it at all times. It often happens that, owing either to bodily weakness, or Satan's temptations, or the absence of clear views upon the doctrines of grace; the true Christian struggles for a season, against desponding apprehensions about his spiritual state. In the character of God he beholds such spotless purity, in the standard of his Law such spirituality and perfection, in his own heart such weakness and defilement, that he is tempted to "write bitter things against himself," and almost to conclude, at times, that "there is no help for him in his God." Here, more than in any other situation, patience is demanded. The spirit says—"Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."† And again "wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say on the Lord."‡

Subject to these difficulties as he travels the path to Heaven, the Christian needs the grace of patience in his soul, to ensure his perseverance in that path. It is by inclining the hearts of his people to exercise this grace that God preserves them in the midst of their trials, and thus brings them "through faith and patience," to inherit at last the glorious promises of his word.

II. Such characters, my brethren, are held up for our imitation, in the text before us, and it is now our part to consider attentively *the exhortation which*

* Rom. 8. 28.

† Isai. 50. 10.

‡ Psal. 27. 14.

is there given in regard to them—"Be not slothful, but followers of them."

Here is, in the first place, a *negative* counsel, "be not slothful," and surely its importance must be felt by every reflecting person. In this life, brethren, we have three paramount objects to pursue: God's glory; our fellow creature's good; our own soul's salvation. Can these objects be attained by the slothful? In this life we have three powerful enemies to struggle against, Satan, the world, and a corrupt heart. Can these enemies be vanquished by the slothful? As well might you expect to arrest the progress of a conflagration, by sitting down as idle spectators of the scene, as to triumph over sin, and scale the walls of heaven, by a feeble and tardy effort. We are in general, very sensible of the sad effect of such a course in regard to temporal concerns; there are few perhaps who do not feel the force and propriety of Solomon's language when he says, "the desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour."* But are we equally alive to the danger of this principle, in our *spiritual concerns*? Do we feel the importance *here*, of laying aside a lukewarm spirit and labouring to enter into the rest of God? Do we read our Bibles, with the anxious concern of persons, who regard the Scriptures as the great charter of their salvation? Do we approach the throne of grace, like suppliants who know they must be heard or perish? Do we mortify sin, lay aside every incumbrance, and press towards the mark, as men who feel that "this is not their rest, that they are seeking a better country, even an heavenly one?" This is the only course, that can lead to a happy issue in the end, the only course that can exempt us from hearing addressed to us, on the last great day of account, that appalling sentence recorded in the 25th of St. Matthew;

* Prov. 21. 25.

"Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed : thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance : but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness : there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Our Bibles, my Brethren ! do not speak in palliating terms of the careless and supine, as if God would regard their slothfulness as a small and insignificant offence, but they denounce against them the most tremendous threatnings, and at the same time hold up to our view a bright assemblage of earnest and zealous contenders for the crown of salvation, and say to us, these are your models, these are your examples ; be "followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Some such characters have always been found within the pale of God's church. In the darkness of Patriarchal ages, such persons lived and shone forth as lights amidst the surrounding gloom. Under the Jewish economy their numbers were increased, and the beauty of holiness which adorned their lives wore a more radiant lustre. Under the Gospel their numbers are greater still ; there are now, blessed be God ! a vast multitude of almost "every nation, kindred, tongue and people," who are united by the common principle of love to Christ, and who can say with truth, as the Apostle did, "the life which we now live in the flesh, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us."*

* Gal. 2. 20.

To whatever part of the Christian Vineyard we turn, there are some of this description to be found, who are adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour, by a life of holiness, or shewing the power of his grace, by a peaceful and triumphant death. In England such an instance has just occurred, as deserves to be mentioned, even at the distance of 3,000 miles. I allude to that veteran soldier of the cross, that highly distinguished servant of God, DR. SIMEON, who, for half a century, proclaimed the Gospel with so much power at Cambridge, and was the honoured instrument of converting thousands to the love and practice of vital religion. *He* has gone to his rest; gone to inherit the promises; gone to "receive a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand."* "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, they rest from their labours and their works do follow them."†

But my intention, at present is, not to direct your eyes abroad, for instances of this description, nor to carry back your thoughts to the cloud of witnesses who have walked with God, and gone to God, in other days; but to fix your thoughts upon one which has lately occurred *among ourselves*, and in reference to whom, my present subject has been selected. A few days since, my Brethren! we followed to the tomb, the mortal remains of one, who though young in years, was mature in grace; and whose conduct as a Christian, I am desirous to hold up as an example, to the young of this community. It is not to expend my efforts, or occupy your thoughts and time, with frivolous panegyric, and empty encomiums, that I introduce to your notice the character of that estimable christian; but to take advantage of what appears to me to have been an illustration of the practicability and blessedness of early piety; and enforce upon you the deep and solemn importance, of following the same holy and happy career.

* Wisdom 5. 16.

Rev. 14. 13.

Our departed Preacher, was one of that favoured number who knew from his childhood "those holy Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* He was early taught to cherish feelings of deep veneration for the word of God. When about sixteen years of age, however, he was led, under divine teaching, to apply the testimony of that word more pointedly to his own case, to perceive with greater clearness the value of his soul, and to seek at a throne of grace a personal interest in the salvation of Christ. From this period faith began to display its decided influence upon the life. Though young, and surrounded, while pursuing his Academic studies, by gay and youthful companions, he "walked with God,"† and "kept himself unspotted from the world."‡ Some perhaps of those companions may now be listening to me, and could testify if it were permitted them, to the steadfast consistency of his walk.

The wise Disposer of events decreed that walk to be short. At a brief interval from the time I have alluded to, he visited him with an illness, which human care and skill could alleviate, but not arrest. Three years of gradual declension supervened. They were years of bodily decline but spiritual growth. At home and abroad, in this and in other lands, among strangers and friends, amid the serious and amid the worldly, one uniform character was maintained, the character of one who knew his accountability to God, who practically felt, that "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."§

In the last stage of his illness however, a marked advancement in grace became apparent. A deeper acquaintance with the heavenly world was evinced. A clearer view of the holiness and majesty of God was present

* 2 Tim. 3. 15.

† Gen. 5. 24.

‡ James 1. 27.

§ 2 Cor. 4. 18.

to the mind. A more intense interest in Divine things was shown, and a holy anxiety, that no mistake or delusion might be cherished, upon a subject so unspeakably important, as the soul's eternal salvation.* At this period our departed friend, displayed more of faithfulness than joy. He aimed at the possession of heartfelt religion. He could be satisfied with nothing short of having "the love of God shed abroad in the heart,"† and every indication, he discovered, or *thought* he discovered of the absence or feebleness of this principle, occasioned that distress of soul, which the child of God alone comprehends. He was truly "working out his salvation with fear and trembling."‡

The time however was at hand when fervent and persevering prayer, was to receive the answer, which the God of truth has pledged himself to give,§ when fear was to give place to hope, and trembling anxiety to the experience of holy joy. On the last day and night of our departed brother's life, the power of religion was shown in its most attractive form. It then became indisputably evident that as flesh and heart were failing, God was indeed the strength of his heart and his portion forever.|| Evidences too plain to be mistaken, of holy delight in God were evinced, and a strong desire to exchange the earthly scene for the immediate presence and more intimate fellowship of his Redeemer.¶ Then it was distinctly perceived and fully realized, that to those who believe Christ is precious,** and that to depart and be with him, is better than the fairest earthly portion.

As the moment of dissolution drew near, the power of faith was increased. Whatever clouds had obscured the mind before, they were now removed. The peace of God, that holy bequest of the departing Saviour, took full possession of the soul. That love

* Psal. 139. 23.
|| Psal. 73. 26.

† Rom. 5. 5.
¶ Phil. 1. 23.

‡ Phil. 2. 12.
** 1 Pet. 2. 7.

§ Luke 18. 1-8.

for others which is the characteristic of a holier world, discovered its powerful influence. And above all an overwhelming sense of the greatness of redeeming love, and the glory of our redeeming God, appeared to be constantly present to the mind.

My Brethren ! I will not intrude upon the sacredness of the closing scene by repeating expressions which while they shewed the powerful influence of religion upon the soul, could only be justly estimated by the dearest friends, but this I will say, and I say it with full reflection, that, if there be one here, who questions the reality and power of religion upon the heart, who doubts its efficacy to make the soul completely triumphant over the sufferings and weakness of a dying hour, that person I could wish to have been there ; he would have felt it impossible, I conceive, to witness the striking indications of God's transcendent peace, and to listen to the calm and rational, yet fervent ascriptions of praise, which were poured fourth from the heart of our departed Brother, to the Author of his soul's salvation, without being compelled to exclaim ; " Verily there is a reward for the righteous ; verily there is a God that judgeth the earth. " *

My Junior Brethren ! I press this subject particularly upon your notice. It is one of your own number of whom I have been speaking ; one of your own number, who thus, after shewing us what is meant by a pious life and peaceful death, and a blessed foretaste of future happiness, has gone " through faith and patience, to inherit, in all their fulness, the precious promises of the Gospel. I repeat it, my Junior Brethren ! it is one of your own number, of whose life and death, I have been speaking, and whose example I have wished to hold up to your view, as one, which now, in the morning of your days, is worthy of your imitation. Other examples

* Psal. 98. 11.

there are which it is lawful to imitate ; some of them possessing powerful attractions, for the ingenuous mind. There are examples of tried integrity, examples of active diligence, examples of eminent learning or scientific acquirement. All these, under certain circumstances, it may be admissible to take, as the models of imitation. But, suffer me, as the Minister of Christ, to take my stand upon higher ground and say to you, that all the wealth which diligence ever accumulated, and all the learning which application ever acquired, and all the lustre, which talents or splendid achievements ever shed upon the brow of their most favoured votary, are but the small dust in the balance, when weighed against the faith and holiness, the peace and everlasting blessedness, of the humble follower of the Son of God. His is wisdom which never fails ; his are riches which never rust ; his are honours which never fade, while heaven remains and God is true. Suffer me to press with earnestness upon you, this vitally important truth, that whatever others may be or attain ; whatever eminence they may reach, in the world's estimation, *the faithful servant of Christ, whether found among the youthful or the aged, among the learned or the ignorant, among the affluent or the poor, is the most honorable and useful character in this world, the only exalted and happy one, in the world to come.* Such an example has been placed before you. Be it your part to follow it. You have seen that the young can be religious, yet consistent ; devoted to God, yet happy in themselves ; in short, that they can live for the glory of Christ, and honour him in their death, and then go to share his favour, in the immortal glories of Heaven. Oh, remember, there is the same heaven open for *you* ; there is the same Saviour to bring *you* to it, and the same precious promises to animate *you* on your way. Take then, your stand, my young friends, upon the side of God. Contend for this noble prize. Be "followers of

them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

And you, my Brethren! who have passed the meridian of your days, who have been spared for many years, and shared so long in the gracious opportunities afforded you of seeking and serving God; let not the summons come for your removal, without finding you possessed of that precious faith, and regenerate heart which are requisite, for the heirs of promise. How will you feel on the day of final account, to see many a youthful disciple coming from the east and west, to sit down with Jesus in the Kingdom of God, if you are to be forever excluded from it?—Oh, remember your time is short. If ever you are followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, it must be soon. Now is the precious season. Youth is gone by. Vigour is expended. Age has come. Shall it be said in reference to your best and highest interests, that "your harvest is past, your summer is ended, and you are not saved?"* God forbid! Rather let it be seen, that "the hoary head is a crown of glory if it be found in the way of righteousness."†

* Jer. 8. 20.

† Prov. 16. 31.